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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the differences among 65 instructors' performance in the San Diego State College Department of Elementary Education, according to their student ratings. Comparisons were made in relation to the instructors' employment situation--tenured and non-tenured; to their professional rank--assistant, associate or full professor; and to a combination of both. It was concluded that: 1) Student ratings of instruction seem to be correlated with instructors' academic rank. Associate professors were consistently favored as compared with assistants and full professors; 2) The variable tenure appears to increase differences between academic ranks. When tenured associates were compared with tenured professors, differences between the ranks were greater than when tenured and non-tenured associates, as a single group, were compared with tenured full professors; 3) The variable non-tenure appears to weaken differences between academic ranks. When assistants (both tenured and non-tenured) were compared with associate professors (both tenured and non-tenured), differences found between the two groups were greater than when only the non-tenured assistant and the non-tenured associate professors were compared; 4) The variable tenure, as compared with academic rank, may contribute more to discrimination between instructors, as rated by students. (Author/AG)

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CALIFORNIA EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH ASSOCIATION

49th ANNUAL MEETING - SAN DIEGO

A STUDY OF STUDENT RATINGS OF ELEMENTARY EDUCATION INSTRUCTORS

AT SAN DIEGO STATE COLLEGE

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This paper represents a part of a larger study being carried out by the San Diego State College Department of Elementary Education on students' evaluation of instruction. It was its purpose to study the differences among instructors' performance according to their student ratings. Comparisons were made in relation to the instructors' employment situation—tenured, nontenured and supervisors; to their professional rank—assistant, associate or full professor; and to a combination of both.

Five hypotheses were stated:

Hypothesis I. There are no significant differences among assistant, associate and full professors, as far as their performance, evaluated by their own students, is concerned.

Hypothesis II. There are no significant differences between tenured associate and tenured full professors, as far as their performance, evaluated by their own students, is concerned.

Hypothesis III. There are no significant differences between nontenured assistant and nontenured associate professors, as far as their performance, evaluated by their own students, is concerned.

Hypothesis IV. There are no significant differences ^{between} tenured and nontenured professors, as far as their performance, evaluated by their own students, is concerned.

Hypothesis V. There are no significant differences between supervisors and faculty who do supervision, as far as their performance, evaluated by their own student teachers, is concerned.

To test the hypotheses of this study, a twenty-one-item attitude questionnaire was employed (Appendix A). The questionnaire dealt with aspects related to the instructors' personal characteristics (items 1, 8, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16 and 17), methodological characteristics (items 2, 6, 7, 9, 10, 18, 19, 20

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and 21), and knowledge of the subject matter (items 3,4, 5 and 11). The attitude scale allowed for responses on five levels, as follows: (1) strongly agree; (2) agree; (3) undecided; (4) disagree; and (5) strongly disagree. A special rating form was used for the comparison of supervisors and faculty who do supervision (Appendix B). The form used the same five-level scale explained before but it included only nine items.

These instruments were given to students registered in courses taught by faculty in the Department of Elementary Education, at the end of the 1970 spring semester.

The study involved a sample of sixty-five faculty members of the San Diego State College Department of Elementary Education. It was planned that the whole population of faculty in the department would take part in the study, but the noncompulsory character of the evaluative process resulted in many faculty who did not choose to participate.

The academic rank and the employment situation of the instructors involved in the study can be observed in Table 1.

The main limitation of this study was that some teachers did not hand out the evaluative questionnaires to their students. This fact left out of the study a sample of instructors whose characteristics might have played an important role in its findings and has biased the sample to a certain extent. It also may have made it more difficult to find a significant difference where one may actually exist.

The statistical analysis of the data was done through chi square tests. In order to determine the direction of the results, everywhere a significant difference was found, data were rearranged into 2x2 tables. The procedure followed to get this kind of table consisted of reducing the five-level scale of attitudes into an agree-disagree dichotomy. The "agree" cell included the sum of the strongly agree and agree frequencies and the "disagree" attitude represented the sum of the disagree and strongly disagree attitude frequencies. The undecided attitude and the blanks were left out.

The findings of the study were the following:

Hypothesis I compared student evaluations of instruction by academic rank. Significant differences were found among academic ranks, consistently favoring associates. In some instances associates clustered with assistants, both ranks being equally favored in relation to professors. In other instances they clustered with professors, both being equally rated higher than assistants. It is interesting to notice that associates clustered with assistants only in those items which were supposed to involve the evaluation of personal characteristics. However, associates clustered with professors in most items designed to evaluate knowledge of the subject matter and in some designed to evaluate instructors' methodological characteristics (Figure 1, page 6). A plausible interpretation for these findings would be that associates, having already been positively reinforced by a promotion, would feel encouraged to keep trying for the next promotion. This effort could be responsible for their better performance in personal characteristics,

methodological characteristics, and knowledge of the subject matter areas. Assistants, probably just beginning a career, would try to compensate for their lack of professional experience by reacting to students with more positive personal behavior. Professors, having reached the highest professional rank, may have more security and would be less concerned with the evaluation of their performance. This could explain student ratings not particularly favoring their personal and methodological characteristics though their knowledge of the subject matter is highly rated. Associates being rated higher than the two other ranks, is consistent with the study by Remmers and Elliot (1949).

Hypothesis II compared tenured associates and tenured full professors performances and was rejected since significant differences were found between them. In all the items where a significant difference was found, it always favored tenured associates (Figure 2, page 8). Comparing these findings with those of Hypothesis I, it seems that the introduction of the variable tenure contributed to a stronger discrimination between associates and professors, in favor of associates. This inference was made from the fact that the variable, tenure was present for all professors when the comparisons of Hypothesis I were made. However, this did not happen in the case of associates, since not all of those who participated in this study had tenure. If differences between associates and professors increased when nontenured associates were not present in the comparison, it appears reasonable to hypothesize that the variable tenure may have contributed positively to the increase of those differences.

Hypothesis III compared nontenured assistant and associate professors and was accepted due to the lack of evidence supporting the existence of significant differences between the two ranks (Figure 3, page 10). Taking as point of reference the findings of Hypothesis I which indicated significant differences between assistants and associates, it seems that the introduction of the variable nontenure, in the Hypothesis III, has attenuated differences between the ranks. This observation appears to be supported by the opposite results that the variable, tenure seemed to have contributed to in Hypothesis II.

Hypothesis IV compared tenured and nontenured instructors and was rejected, since significant differences were found between the two categories. According to the data analysis, tenured instructors were highly favored as compared with nontenured (Figure 4, page 11). Actually, the comparison made in this hypothesis was between a group composed of nontenured assistants and nontenured associates on one side and a group composed of tenured associates and tenured professors on the other. If it is assumed, in light of the findings of the three previous hypotheses, that the variable tenure appears to increase differences between the ranks and that nontenure appears to reduce differences, it would be logical to expect that nontenure ranks pooled together on one side versus tenure ranks pooled together on the other side, would produce the results of Hypothesis IV. On the other hand, the results of Hypothesis IV, by reciprocity, seem to support the assumption on the variable tenure.

Hypothesis V compared supervisors and faculty who do supervision. Significant differences were found between the two groups; therefore

Table 1
Faculty Distribution According to Employment Situation and Academic Rank

| Employment situation | Academic rank | | | Total |
|----------------------|---------------|-----------|-----------|-------|
| | Assistant | Associate | Professor | |
| Tenured | 1 | 5 | 14 | 20 |
| Nontenured | 14 | 2 | 29 | 45 |
| Total | 15 | 7 | 14 | 65 |

the hypothesis was rejected. Supervisors were consistently rated higher than faculty. Lack of additional information about the composition of the groups compared prevents any explanations for why these findings occurred. It would be interesting if follow-up studies could have the faculty group stratified at least according to academic rank and tenure-nontenured professional situation. As to the supervision group, it would be important to have them stratified according to possession of a bachelor, master's or doctoral degree.

On the basis of this study's findings, the following conclusions seem warranted:

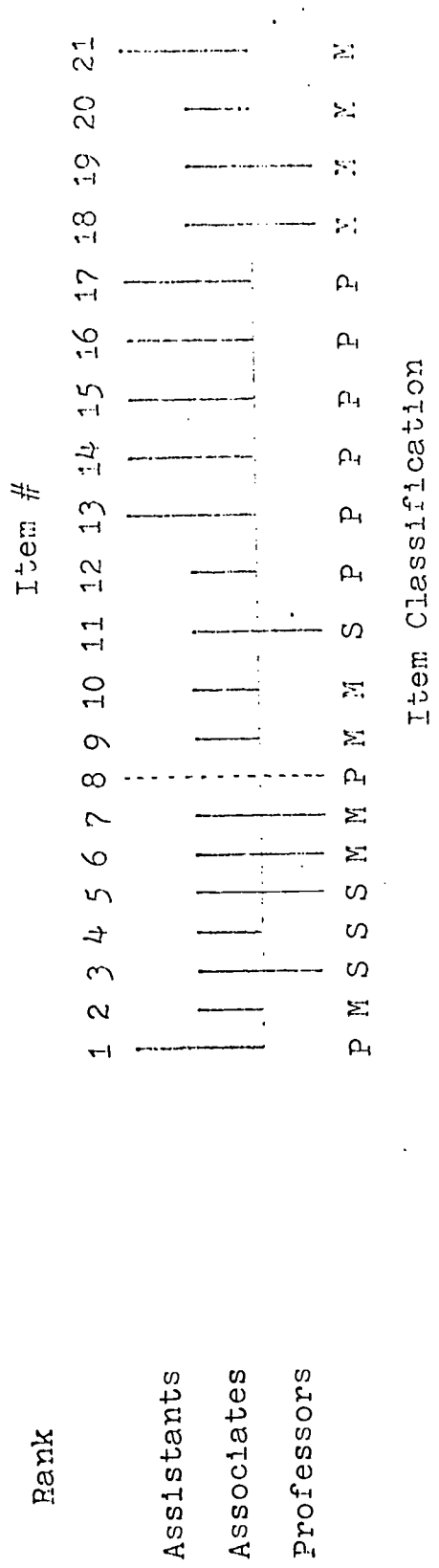
1. Student ratings of instruction seem to be correlated with instructors' academic rank. Associate professors were consistently favored as compared with assistants and full professors. In items where personal characteristics were involved, associates and assistants tended to be equally rated. In all the instances where associates clustered with professors, they were favored in relation to assistants in aspects dealing with methodology and knowledge of subject matter.

2. The variable tenure appears to increase differences between academic ranks. When tenured associates were compared with tenured professors, differences between the ranks were greater than when tenured and nontenured associates, as a single group, were compared with tenured full professors.

3. The variable nontenure appears to weaken differences between academic ranks. When assistants (including tenured and nontenured) were compared with associate professors (both tenured and nontenured), differences found between the two groups were greater than when only the nontenured assistant and associate professors were compared.

4. The variable tenure, as compared with academic rank, may contribute more to discrimination between instructors, as rated by students. When only academic ranks (no matter whether instructors had or had not tenure) were compared, associate professors were consistently favored, though sometimes they clustered with assistants and other times with full professors. If rank were the main discriminator among instructors, it could be expected that Hypothesis IV had been accepted, since the presence of associates in both the tenure and the nontenure groups would have tended to attenuate differences between the groups. However, opposite results occurred and a probable explanation for them might reside in the fact that the variable tenure may affect instructors' performance more than academic rank does.

5. Further study of variables which appear to have influenced the superiority of supervisors' ratings, as compared with teaching faculty who also did supervision, is recommended.



Code: Long full line = 2 equally favored ranks in comparison to the 3rd.
 Short full line = 1 rank is favored in comparison to the other 2.
 Dotted line = no significant differences found among the ranks.
 P = personal characteristics.
 M = methodological characteristics.
 S = knowledge of the subject matter

Figure 1
 Students' Attitude Configuration in Relation to Hypothesis I

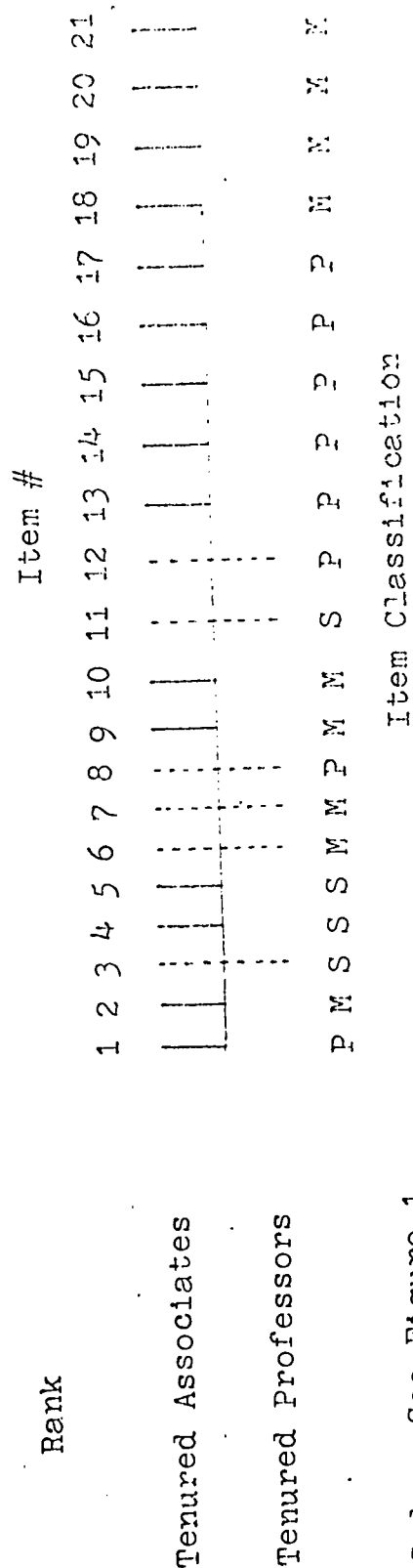
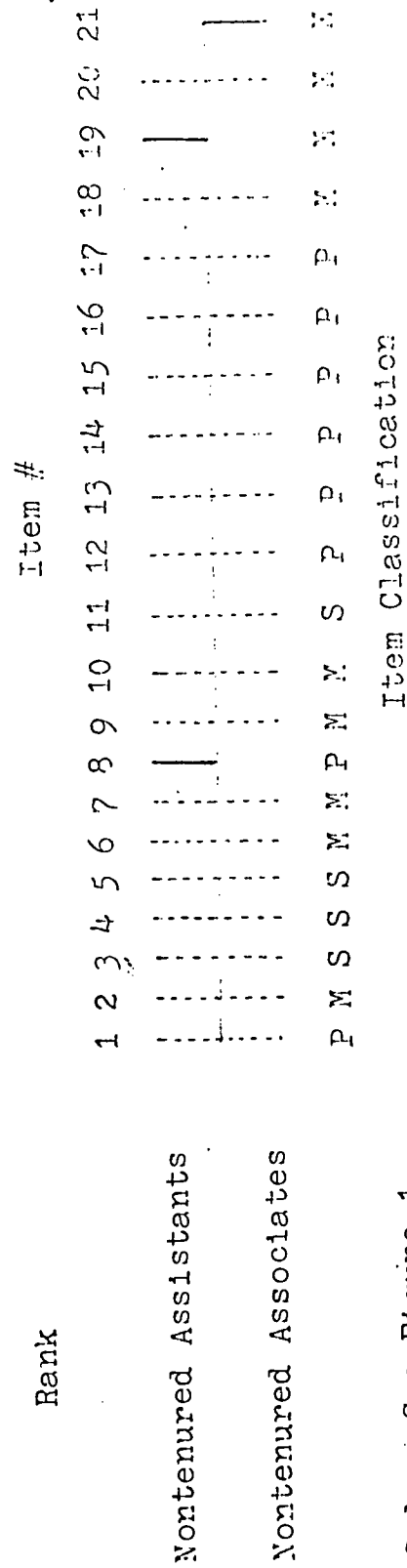


Figure 2

Students' Attitude Configuration in Relation to Hypothesis II



Code: See Figure 1.

Figure 3

Students' Attitude Configuration in Relation to Hypothesis III

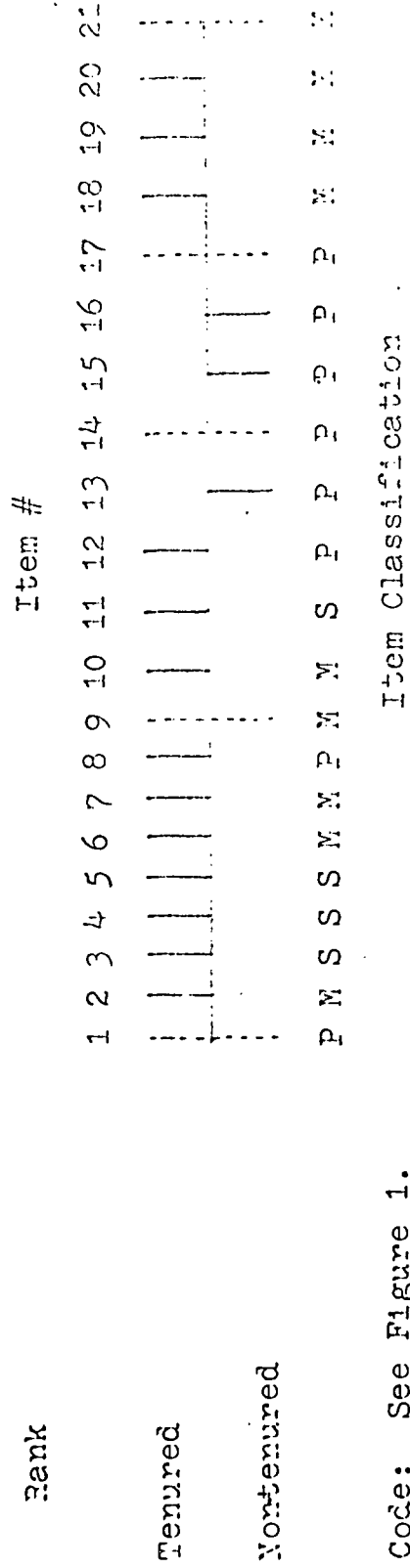


Figure 4
Students' Attitude Configuration in Relation to Hypothesis IV

APPENDIX A

STUDENT INSTRUCTIONAL RATING FORM - ELEMENTARY EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

KEY:

1. Strongly agree
2. Agree
3. Undecided
4. Disagree
5. Strongly disagree
(If you believe a question does not apply to this course, leave the answer sheet blank for that item.)

ANSWER SHEET DIRECTIONS

1. Where it says Name, enter your class standing.
2. Where it says Date, enter the date.
3. Where it says Instructor, enter the instructor's name.
4. Where it says Name of Test, enter the course and section number.
5. Where it says Grade or Class, enter your GPA standing at San Diego State.

1. The instructor was friendly and relaxed with the class.
2. The instructor presented material in a clear and logical manner.
3. The instructor showed mastery of the subject matter.
4. The instructor gave me a great deal which I could not or would not get by independent study or from the textbook.
5. The material presented was relevant to the course objectives.
6. The instructor presented basic principles of teaching and/or learning.
7. The instructor helped students apply these basic principles to specific teaching situations.
8. The instructor seemed sincerely enthusiastic about the subject matter.
9. The instructor usually made the subject matter interesting to me.
10. The instructor's general teaching style and approach served as one (not necessarily the only) appropriate model of good teaching.
11. The course was worthwhile.
12. I would recommend this instructor to a friend.
13. The instructor maintained a warm open atmosphere in this class.
14. I felt free to participate in class discussions when I had a contribution to make.
15. I felt free to consult with the instructor individually whenever I wished.
16. Talking to the instructor individually was helpful.
17. The instructor was personally responsive to and considerate of students.
18. Course assignments were pertinent, useful, and had a direct bearing on the teaching/learning process.
19. The course did not require more work than it was worth.
20. The instructor adequately and fairly assessed how well students mastered the material.
21. I knew what to expect on tests and exams.

APPENDIX B

STUDENT SUPERVISORY RATING FORM - ELEMENTARY EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

KEY:

1. Strongly agree
2. Agree
3. Undecided
4. Disagree
5. Strongly disagree

(If you believe a question does not apply to this course, leave the answer sheet blank for that item.)

ANSWER SHEET DIRECTIONS

1. Where it says Name, enter your class standing.
2. Where it says Date, enter the date.
3. Where it says Instructor, enter the Supervisor's name.
4. Where it says Name of Test, write in Student Teaching.
5. Where it says Grade or Class, enter your GPA at San Diego State.

SUPERVISOR OF STUDENT TEACHING

1. My supervisor makes useful suggestions.
2. My supervisor visits me, meets with me, and/or contacts me often enough.
3. My supervisor tries to understand my student teaching problems.
4. My supervisor lets me know when my teaching is effective.
5. My supervisor gives me frank and constructive criticism.
6. I feel free to discuss my student teaching problems with my supervisor.
7. My supervisor is responsive to and considerate of me as a person.
8. My supervisor allows or encourages me to try my ideas.
9. Over-all, my supervisor has been a help to me.